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ABSTRACT

Noting the difficulty that parents have in saying "no" to their children, this book discusses the needs of the developing child within the family and examines the process of setting limits. Using both case studies from child psychotherapy and informal anecdotes from family life, the book examines the negative associations surrounding the word "no" and celebrates change and movement as essential in building children's and parents' confidence and self-esteem. Chapter 1 of the book concerns parents' interpretation of infants' needs, discusses situations where it is important to say "no," and examines why it is difficult to do so. Chapter 2 examines the years 2 to 5, and focuses on children's perception of the world as magical, discussing how setting limits provides a model of coping and allows children to feel secure in their family and begin to develop resources on their own. Chapter 3 discusses the primary school years, noting that saying "no" is a way of establishing boundaries and separateness, making a space between wishes, thoughts, and actions. The chapter maintains that setting limits helps primary school children distance themselves from their more infantile feelings. Chapter 4 examines adolescence as a period of transformation, noting the importance of a secure base within the home and the adolescents' need to know they are loved and trusted as they find a new identity. The book's afterword addresses the importance of couples setting limits and the need for a gap between people to allow individual development. (Contains approximately 30 references.) (KB)

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